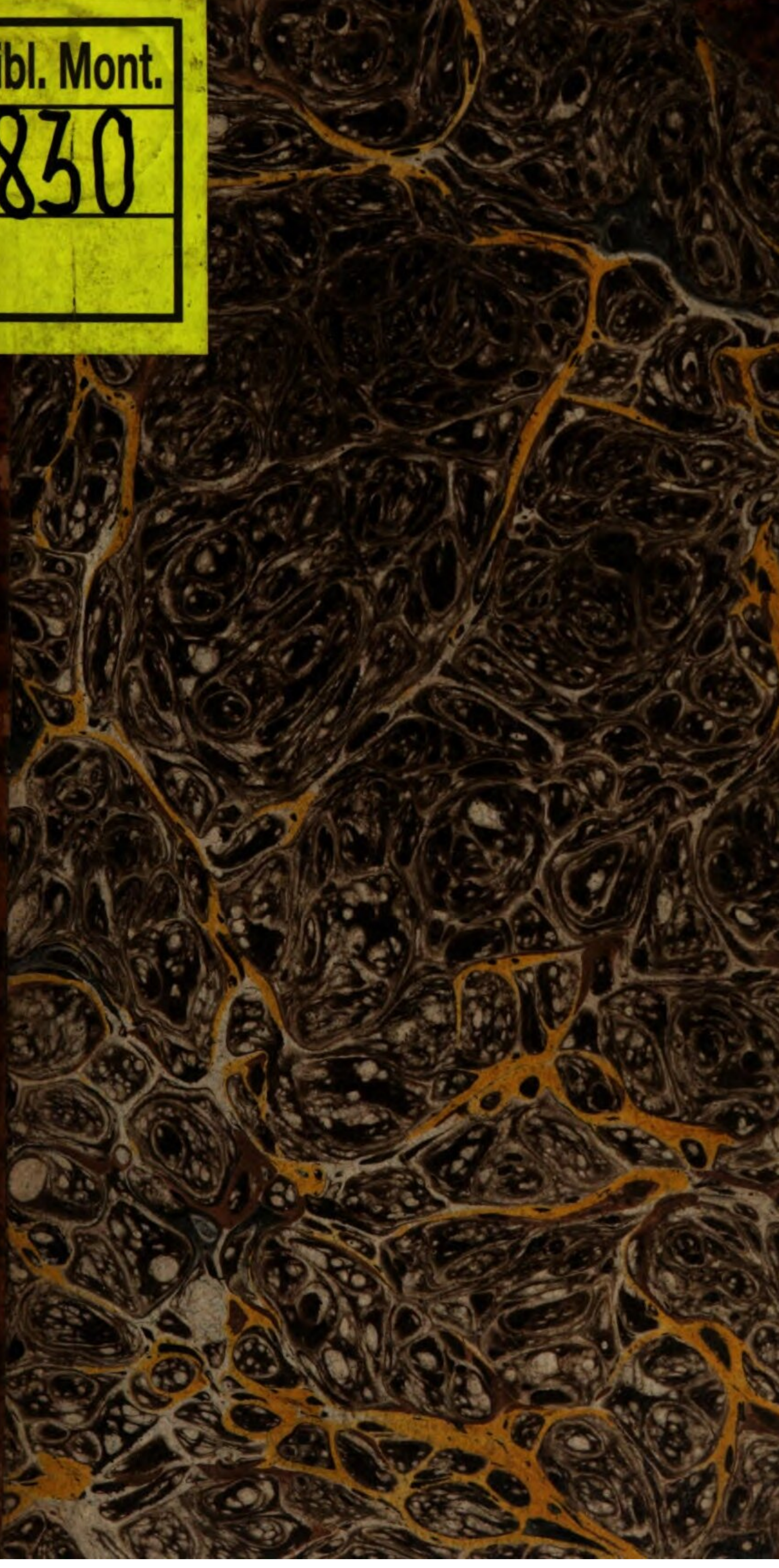


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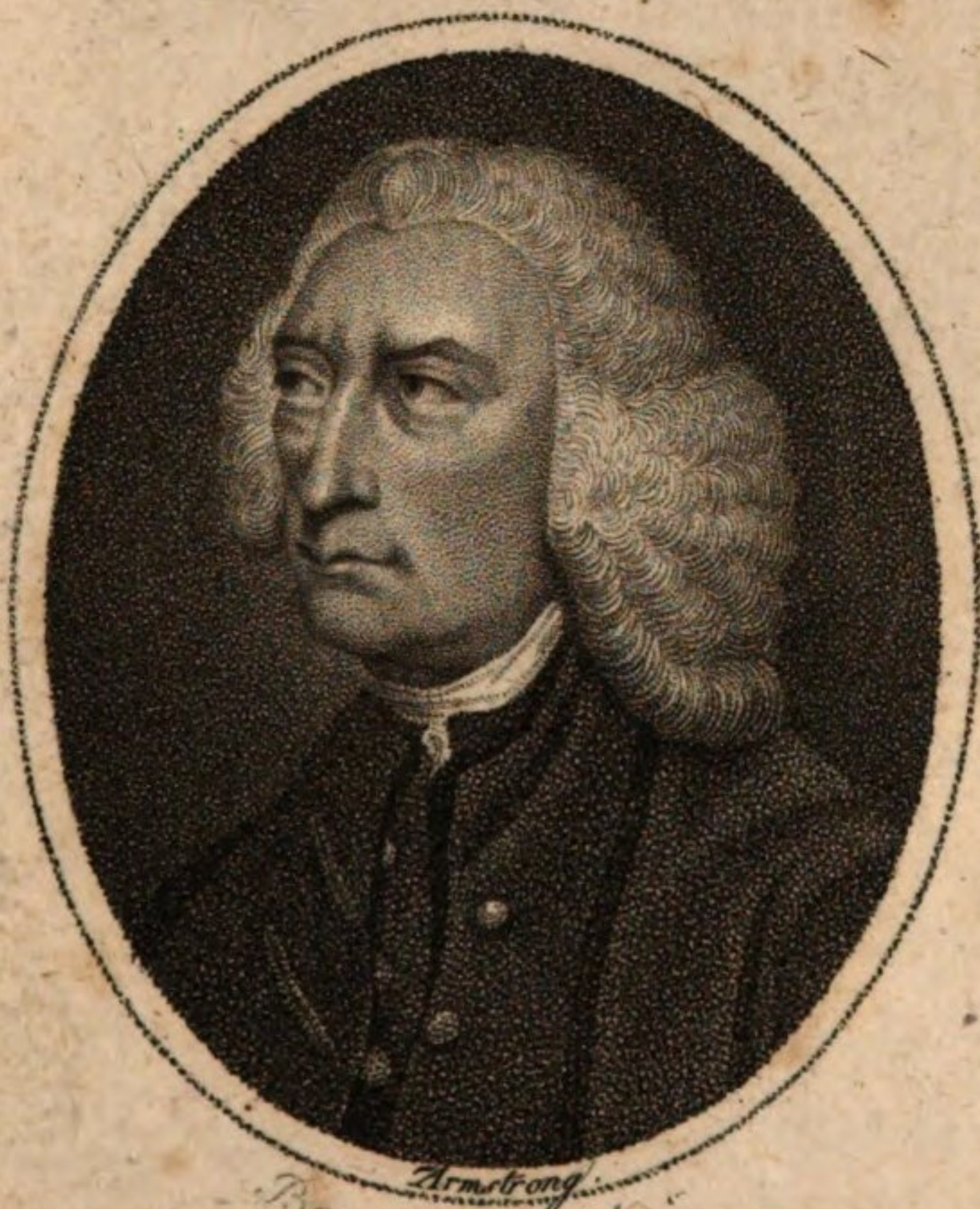
by

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.

Containing the

Art of Preserving Health.
&c.

With the Author's Life.



Benoist . Sculpt.

Paris.

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Dr. ARMSTRONG'S LIFE.

JOHN ARMSTRONG was born at Castleton on the banks of the Lidal, in Roxburghshire, Scotland, about the year 1709, where his father and brother were Ministers. He has very pleasingly celebrated his native place, and

“ the stream

On whose Arcadian banks he first drew air,”

in his *Art of Health*, book III. After the ordinary course of school education, he was sent to the University of Edinburgh, where, being designed for the medical profession, his studies were directed to that purpose. He took his degree in physic, Feb. 4. 1732, with uncommon reputation. The subject of his inaugural thesis was *De Tabe purulenta*. He soon after appeared in London in the capacities of physician and author, but did not attain to any great extent of practice or eminence of popularity in the former. His first publication was a fugitive pamphlet, containing a humorous attack on empirics, in the manner and spirit of Lucian, entitled *An Essay for abridging the Study of Physic; to which is added a Dialogue betwixt Hygeia, Mercury, and Pluto, relating to the practice of Physic, as it is managed by a*

certain illustrious Society; and an Epistle from Usbeck the Persian to Joshua Ward, Esq. In 1737, he published *A Synopsis of the History and Cure of the Venereal Disease*, 8vo. This was soon followed by *The Economy of Love*, an elegant and ingenious performance; but the glowing descriptions contained in it have incurred the universal censure of licentiousness, which has excluded it from every respectable collection of poetry. Armstrong, however, pruned many of its luxuriances in an edition printed in 1768, "revised and corrected by the author." In 1744, he published the didactic poem of *The Art of preserving Health*, his chef-d'œuvre, which laid the foundation of his fame, and will remain a lasting monument of his abilities, both as a poet and physician. In 1746, Dr. Armstrong was appointed one of the physicians to the Hospital for Lane and Sick Soldiers, behind Buckingham House. His poem *On Benevolence* in 1751, and another entitled *Taste, an epistle to a young Critic*, in 1753, shewed that he continued to court the muses, but with no extraordinary success. A volume in prose of *Sketches or Essays on various subjects*, under the name of *Launcelot Temple, Esq. in two parts*, appeared in 1758, which had a rapid sale, and was much admired for the humour and knowledge of

the world which they contained. Armstrong's intimate acquaintance, the celebrated Mr. Wilkes, is supposed to have contributed to this volume. In 1760, Dr. Armstrong obtained the appointment of physician to the army of Germany, from whence he wrote, the year following, *Day, an epistle to John Wilkes of Aylesbury, Esq.* In this poem he wantonly hazarded the following reflection on Churchill, which drew on him the serpent-toothed vengeance of that severest of satyrists :

What news to-day !—I ask you not what rogue,
What paltry imp of fortune's now in vogue ;
What forward blundering fool was last preferr'd,
By mere pretence distinguish'd from the herd :
With what new cheat the gaping town is smit ;
What *crazy scribbler* reigns the present *wit* ;
What stuff for winter the Two Booths have mixt ;
What bouncing mimic gives a *Roscius* next !

In the "*Journey*," almost the last lines of poetry which Churchill wrote, after referring those who hinted that he should "run his stock of genius out" to some cotemporary writers who had obtained what he thought unmerited celebrity, he thus pointedly concludes with Armstrong :

Let them, with Armstrong, taking leave of sense,
Read musty lectures on *Benevolence*,

Or con the pages of his gaping *Day*,
Where all his former fame was thrown away;
Where all but barren labour was forgot,
And the vain stiffness of a letter'd Scot.
Let them with Armstrong pass the term of light
But not one hour of darkness, when the night
Suspends this mortal coil, when mem'ry wakes,
When for our past misdoings conscience takes
A deep revenge; when, by reflection led,
She draws his curtains, and looks comfort dead,
Let every muse begone; in vain he turns
And tries to pray for sleep; an *Ætna* burns,
A more than *Ætna* in his coward breast;
And guilt, with vengeance arm'd, forbids him rest.
Tho' soft as plumage from young zephyr's wing
His couch seems hard, and no relief can bring;
Ingratitude hath planted daggers there,
No good man can deserve, no brave man bear.

In this case it must be acknowledged that Armstrong himself afforded the original cause of offence, but the retaliation was unjustifiably severe. Armstrong was incapable of the crime with which he is charged, and a false imputation of ingratitude cannot obscure the character of a humane, benevolent and kindly affectioned man of genius. At this time, party and national animosity ran so high, that it was extremely difficult for a native of Scotland to maintain a

friendly intercourse with an English oppositionist. A disagreement in politics, or rather the demon of party, suspended therefore, if not dissolved, the friendly intimacy which had subsisted between our author and Mr. Wilkes. After the peace of 1763, Armstrong returned to London and resumed the practice of physic; but his habits and manners opposed an insurmountable barrier against popularity. He inherited not that kind of spirit fitted to elbow his way through a crowd of competitors; nor was his mind groveling enough, or sufficiently accommodating, to adopt the petty arts of rising in practice. He could not ingratiate himself into the good graces of those he did not esteem. He could not unbend to the frivolities of tea and card table parties. He could not intrigue with nurses, nor associate with the various knots of pert, insipid well-bred, impertinent, good-humoured, malicious gossips, which are found so necessary to introduce a young physician into connections. He chose rather to spend his time at home in the indolent occupations of reading and study, or to pass an attic evening in a select company of men of taste and learning. Armstrong continued occasionally rather to amuse than exert himself in literary productions, serious and humourous sometimes; in

the latter, mistaking oddity for wit, and indulging an unpleasant vein of vulgarity in expression, and misanthropy in sentiment. These latter effusions are scarcely worth particularizing. In 1770, he published a collection of *Miscellanies*, in 2 vols. 8vo. In an advertisement to this collection he says, he “ never courted the public. He wrote chiefly for his own amusement, and because he found it an agreeable and innocent way of sometimes passing an idle hour. He has always most heartily despised the opinion of the mobility, from the lowest to the highest : and if it is true, what he has sometimes been told, that the best judges are on his side, he desires no more in the article of fame and renown as a writer. If the best judges of this age honour him with their approbation, all the worst too of the next will favour him with theirs, when by Heaven’s grace he’ll be too far beyond the reach of their unmeaning praises to receive any disgust from them.” *The Forced Marriage, a tragedy*, was written in 1758, and offered to Garrick, by whom it was rejected. In 1771, he made a journey to France and Italy, accompanied by Mr. Fuseli, the celebrated painter, who warmly attests the benevolence of his character. On this tour he took a last farewell, in Italy, of his friend Smollet, to whom

he was much attached. He published a short account of this ramble under his assumed name of *Launcelot Temple*. His last production was a pamphlet bearing his own name, entitled, *Medical Essays*, 4to, 1773. Towards the conclusion of this work he accounts, with some acrimony, for the limited practice he attained, from a disqualification of employing the usual means, from a ticklish state of spirits, and from a distempered excess of sensibility. He complains much of the behaviour of some of his brethren, and of pretended literary critics. He died September 7. 1779, in consequence, it is said, of a fall he received in stepping out of a coach. To the surprise of his friends, he left upwards of three thousand pounds, saved from a very moderate income, arising principally from his half-pay. Armstrong was a man much beloved and respected by his intimates; a man of learning and genius, of considerable abilities in his profession, of great benevolence and goodness of heart, fond of associating with literary characters; but a morbid sensibility preyed on his temper, and a languid listlessness damped his intellectual efforts. He contributed to Thomson's excellent poem of the *Castle of Indolence* the fine stanzas descriptive of the diseases to which the votaries of indolence

finally become martyrs. The following lines in that poem are said to be descriptive of Armstrong's propensity to absence.

“ There was a man of special grave remark—

* * * * *

With him was sometimes join'd, in silent walk,

(Profoundly silent, for they never spoke)

One shyer still, who quite detested talk.

Oft stung by spleen, at once away he broke

To groves of pine and broad o'ershadowing oak ;

There, inly thrill'd, he wanderd all alone,

And on himself his pensive fury wroke :

He never utter'd word, save, when first shone

The glitt'ring star of eve — ‘ Thank Heav'n ! the day
is done. ’

Armstrong lived also in habits of intimacy with Granger, Sir John Pringle, and other men of wit and learning. His reputation as a poet is almost solely founded on his *Art of preserving Health*, which is of the highest order of didactic poems. His other pieces scarcely rise above mediocrity. “ To describe, ” says Dr. Wharton, “ so difficult a thing, gracefully and poetically, as the effects of a distemper on the human body, was reserved for Armstrong. There is a classical correctness and closeness of style in this poem that are truly admirable ; and the subject is raised and adorned by numberless poetical images.”

THE ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK I.

AIR.

DAUGHTER of Pæon, Queen of ev'ry joy,
Hygeia! ¹ whose indulgent smile sustains
The various race luxuriant Nature pours,
And on th' immortal essences bestows
Immortal youth, auspicious, O descend,
Thou cheerful guardian of the rolling year!
Whether thou wanton'st on the western gale,
Or shak'st the rigid pinions of the north,
Diffusest life and vigour through the tracts
Of air, through earth and ocean's deep domain.
When through the blue serenity of heav'n
Thy pow'r approaches, all the wasteful host
Of Pain and Sicknes squalid and deformed
Confounded sink into the loathsome gloom,
Where in deep Erebus involv'd the fiends
Grow more profane. Whatever shapes of death,
Shook from the hideous chambers of the globe,
Swarm through the shudd'ring air; whatever plagues
Or meager Famine breeds, or with slow wings
Rise from the putrid wat'ry element,

¹ Hygeia, the goddess of Health, was, according to the genealogy of the heathen deities, the daughter of Æsculapius, who, as well as Apollo, was distinguished by the name of Pæon.

The damp waste forest, motionless and rank,
That smothers earth and all the breathless winds,
Or the vile carnage of th' inhuman field;
Whatever baneful breathes the rotten south,
Whatever ill th' extremes or sudden change
Of cold and hot or moist and dry produce,
'They fly thy pure effulgence, they and all
The secret poisons of avenging Heav'n,
And all the pale tribes halting in the train
Of Vice and heedless Pleasure; or if aught
The comet's glare amid the burning sky,
Mournful eclipse, or planets ill combin'd,
Portend disastrous to the vital world,
Thy salutary pow'r averts their rage,
Averts the gen'ral bane; and but for thee
Nature would sicken, Nature soon would die.

Without thy cheerful active energy
No rapture swells the breast, no poet sings;
No more the maids of Helicon delight.
Come then with me, O Goddess, heav'nly gay!
Begin the song, and let it sweetly flow,
And let it wisely teach thy wholesome laws:
"How best the fickle fabric to support
Of mortal man; in healthful body how
A healthful mind the longest to maintain."
'Tis hard, in such a strife of rules, to chuse
The best, and those of most extensive use;
Harder in clear and animated song
Dry philosophic precepts to convey;
Yet with thy aid the secret wilds I trace
Of Nature, and with daring steps proceed
Through paths the Muses never trod before.

Nor should I wander doubtful of my way
Had I the lights of that sagacious mind
Which taught to check the pestilential fire
And quell the deadly Python of the Nile.
O thou, belov'd by all the graceful arts,
Thou, long the fav'rite of the healing pow'rs,
Indulge, O Mead! a well design'd Essay
Howe'er imperfect, and permit that I
My little knowledge with my country share,
Till you the rich Asclepian stores unlock
And with new graces dignify the theme.

Ye who amid this fev'rish world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares a mind,
Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air,
Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
And volatile corruption, from the dead,
The dying, sick'ning, and the living world
Exhal'd, to sully heav'n's transparent dome
With dim mortality. It is not air
That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations rank and fell,
The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
Of Nature, when from shape and texture she
Relapses into fighting elements:
It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things—
Much moisture hurts; but here a sordid bath,
With oily rancor fraught, relaxes more
The solid frame than simple moisture can.
Besides, immur'd in many a sullen bay
That never felt the freshness of the breeze,
This slumb'ring deep remains, and ranker grows

With sickly rest; and (tho' the lungs abhor
To drink the dun fuliginous abyss)
Did not the acid vigor of the mine,
Roll'd from so many thund'ring chimnies, tame
The putrid steams that overswarm the sky,
This caustic venom would perhaps corrode
Those tender cells that draw the vital air,
In vain with all their unctuous rills bedew'd,
Or by the drunken venous tubes that yawn
In countless pores o'er all the pervious skin
Imbib'd, would poison the balsamic blood,
And rouse the heart to ev'ry fever's rage.
While yet you breathe, away! The rural wilds
Invite, the mountains call you, and the vales,
The woods, the streams, and each ambrosial breeze
That fans the ever-undulating sky,
A kindly sky! whose fost'ring power regales
Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign.
Find then some woodland scene where Nature smiles
Benign, where all her honest children thrive.
To us there wants not many a happy seat:
Look round the smiling land; such numbers rise
We hardly fix, bewilder'd in our choice.
See where, enthron'd in adamant state,
Proud of her Bards, imperial Windsor sits;
There chuse thy seat, in some aspiring grove
Fast by the slowly winding Thames, or where
Broadest he laves fair Richmond's green retreats.
Richmond that sees a hundred villas rise
Rural or gay. O from the summer's rage,
O wrap me in the friendly gloom that hides
Umbrageous Ham! — But if the busy town

Attract thee still to toil for power or gold,
Sweetly thou may'st thy vacant hours possess
In Hampstead, courted by the western wind;
Or Greenwich, waving o'er the winding flood;
Or lose the world amid the sylvan wilds
Of Dulwich, yet by barb'rous arts unspoil'd.
Green rise the Kentish hills in cheerful air—
But on the marshy plains that Lincoln spreads
Build not, nor rest too long thy wand'ring feet;
For on a rustic throne of dewy turf,
With baneful fogs her aching temples bound,
Quartana there presides, a meager Fiend
Begot by Eurus, when his brutal force
Compress'd the slothful Naiad of the fens.
From such a mixture sprung this fitful pest
With fev'rish blasts subdues the sick'ning land:
Cold tremors come, with mighty love of rest,
Convulsive yawnings, lassitude, and pains
That sting the burden'd brows, fatigue the loins,
And rack the joints and ev'ry torpid limb:
Then parching heat succeeds, till copious sweats
O'erflow, a short relief from former ills:
Beneath repeated shocks the wretches pine;
The vigour sinks, the habit melts away;
The cheerful, pure, and animated bloom
Dies from the face with squalid atrophy
Devour'd, in sallow melancholy clad;
And oft the Sorc'ress in her sated wrath
Resigns them to the furies of her train,
The bloated Hydrops, and the yellow Fiend
Ting'd with her own accumulated gall.

In quest of sites avoid the mournful plain

Where osiers thrive and trees that love the lake,
Where many lazy muddy rivers flow;
Nor for the wealth that all the Indies roll
Fix near the marshy margin of the Main;
For from the humid soil and wat'ry reign
Eternal vapours rise; the spongy air
For ever weeps, or turgid with the weight
Of waters, pours a sounding deluge down.
Skies such as these let ev'ry mortal shun
Who dreads the dropsy, palsy, or the gout,
Tertian, corrosive scurvy, or moist catarrh,
Or any other injury that grows
From raw spun fibres idle and unstrung,
Skin ill-perspiring, and the purple flood
In languid eddies loit'ring into phlegm.

Yet not alone from humid skies we pine,
For air may be too dry. The subtile heav'n,
That winnows into dust the blasted downs,
Bare and extended wide without a stream,
Too fast imbibes th' attenuated lymph
Which by the surface from the blood exhales;
The lungs grow rigid, and with toil essay
Their flexible vibrations, or inflam'd
Their tender ever-moving structure thaws:
Spoil'd of its limpid vehicle, the blood
A mass of lees remains, a drossy tide
That slow as Lethe wanders through the veins
Unactive in the services of life,
Unfit to lead its pitchy current through
The secret mazy channels of the brain:
The melancholic Fiend (that worst despair
Of physic) hence the rust complexion'd man

Pursues whose blood is dry, whose fibres gain
Too stretch'd a tone; and hence in climes adust
So sudden tumults seize the trembling nerves,
And burning fevers glow with double rage.

Fly, if you can, these violent extremes
Of air; the wholesome is nor moist nor dry.
But as the power of chusing is deny'd
To half mankind, a further task ensues
How best to mitigate these fell extremes,
How breathe unhurt the with'ring element
Or hazy atmosphere; tho' custom moulds
To ev'ry clime the soft Promethean clay,
And he who first the fogs of Essex breath'd
(So kind is native air) may in the fens
Of Essex from invet'rate ills revive
At pure Montpelier or Bermuda caught.
But if the raw and oozy heav'n offend,
Correct the soil, and dry the sources up
Of wat'ry exhalation; wide and deep
Conduct your trenches through the quaking bog;
Sollicitous with all your winding arts
Betray th' unwilling lake into the stream,
And weed the forest, and invoke the winds
To break the toils where strangled vapours lie,
Or through the thickets send the crackling flames:
Mean-time at home with cheerful fires dispel
The humid air, and let your table smoke
With solid roast or bak'd, or what the herds
Of tamer breed supply, or what the wilds
Yield to the toilsome pleasures of the chase.
Gen'rous your wine, the boast of rip'ning years,
But frugal be your cups: the languid frame,

Vapid and sunk from yesterday's debauch,
Shrinks from the cold embrace of wat'ry heav'ns.
But neither these nor all Apollo's arts
Disarm the dangers of the dropping sky
Unless with exercise and manly toil
You brace your nerves and spur the lagging blood.
The fatt'ning clime let all the sons of ease
Avoid. If indolence would wish to live,
Go yawn and loiter out the long slow year
In fairer skies. If drougthy regions parch
The skin and lungs and bake the thick'ning blood,
Deep in the waving forest chuse your seat,
Where fuming trees refresh the thirsty air,
And wake the fountains from their secret beds,
And into lakes dilate the rapid stream.
Here spread your gardens wide, and let the cool,
The moist relaxing vegetable store
Prevail in each repast; your food supply'd
By bleeding life be gently wasted down
By soft decoction and a mellowing heat
To liquid balm, or, if the solid mass
You chuse, tormented in the boiling wave,
That through the thirsty channels of the blood
A smooth diluted chyle may ever flow.
The fragrant dairy from its cool recess
Its nectar acid or benign will pour
To drown your thirst, or let the mantling bowl
Of keen sherbet the fickle taste relieve;
For with the viscous blood the simple stream
Will hardly mingle, and fermented cups
Oft dissipate more moisture than they give.
Yet when pale seasons rise, or Winter rolls

High on the breezy ridge, whose lofty sides
Th' ethereal deep with endless billows chafes;
His purer mansion nor contagious years
Shall reach, nor deadly putrid airs annoy.
But may no fogs from lake or fenny plain
Involve my hill! and wheresoe'er you build,
Whether on sunburnt Epsom or the plains
Wash'd by the silent Lee, in Chelsea low,
Or high Blackheath, with wint'ry winds assail'd,
Dry be your house, but airy more than warm,
Else ev'ry breath of ruder wind will strike
Your tender body through with rapid pains:
Fierce coughs will tease you, hoarseness bind your
voice,

Or moist gravedo load your aching brows.
These to defy, and all the fates that dwell
In cloister'd air tainted with steaming life,
Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms,
And still at azure noontide may your dome
At ev'ry window drink the liquid sky.

Need we the sunny situation here
And theatres open to the south commend,
Here where the morning's misty breath infests
More than the torrid noon! How sickly grow,
How pale, the plants in those ill-fated vales
That, circled round with the gigantic heap
Of mountains, never felt nor ever hope
To feel the genial vigour of the sun!
While on the neighb'ring hill the rose inflames
The verdant spring; in virgin beauty blows
The tender lily languishingly sweet;
O'er ev'ry hedge the wanton woodbine roves,

And autumn ripens in the summer's ray.
Nor less the warmer living tribes demand
The fost'ring Sun, whose energy divine
Dwells not in mortal fire, whose gen'rous heat
Glow through the mass of grosser elements,
And kindles into life the pond'rous spheres:
Cheer'd by thy kind invigorating warmth
We court thy beams, great Majesty of Day!
If not the soul, the regent of this world,
First-born of heav'n, and only less than God!

BOOK II.

DIET.

ENOUGH of air; a desert subject now,
Rougher and wilder, rises to my sight;
A barren waste, where not a garland grows
To bind the Muse's brow, not ev'n a proud
Stupendous solitude frowns o'er the heath
To rouse a noble horror in the soul,
But rugged paths fatigue, and Error leads
Through endless labyrinths the devious feet.
Farewel, etherial fields! The humbler arts
Of life, the table and the homely gods
Demand my song. Elysian Gales, adieu!

The blood, the fountain whence the spirits flow,
The gen'rous stream that waters ev'ry part,
And motion, vigour, and warm life, conveys
To ev'ry particle that moves or lives,
This vital fluid, through unnumber'd tubes
Pour'd by the heart, and to the heart again
Refunded, scourg'd for ever round and round,
Enrag'd with heat and toil, at last forgets

His horrors o'er the world, thou may'st indulge
In feasts more genial, and impatient broach
The mellow cask : then too the scourging air
Provokes to keener toils than sultry droughts
Allow : but rarely we such skies blaspheme :
Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs
Bedew'd, our seasons droop ; incumbent still
A pond'rous heav'n o'erwhelms the sinking soul :
Lab'ring with storms in heapy mountains rise
Th' embattled clouds, as if the Stygian shades
Had left the dungeon of eternal night,
Till black with thunder all the South descends.
Scarce in a show'rless day the heav'ns indulge
Our melting clime, except the baleful East
Withers the tender spring and sourly checks
The fancy of the year. Our fathers talk
Of summers, balmy airs, and skies serene :
Good Heav'n ! for what unexpiated crimes
This dismal change ! The brooding elements
Do they, your pow'rful ministers of wrath,
Prepare some fierce exterminating plague ?
Or is it fix'd in the decrees above
That lofty Albion melt into the main ?
Indulgent Nature ! O dissolve this gloom !
Bind in eternal adamant the winds
That drown or wither, give the genial West
To breathe, and in its turn the sprightly North,
And may once more the circling seasons rule
The year, nor mix in ev'ry monstrous day !
Mean-time the moist malignity to shun
Of burthen'd skies, mark where the dry champaign
Swells into cheerful hills, where marjoram

And thyme, the love of bees, perfume the air,
And where the cynorrhodon ¹ with the rose
For fragrance vies; for in the thirsty soil
Most fragrant breathe the aromatic tribes.
There bid thy roofs high on the basking steep
Ascend, there light thy hospitable fires,
And let them see the winter morn arise,
The summer ev'ning blushing in the west,
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind
O'erhung defends you from the blust'ring North
And bleak affliction of the peevish East.
Oh! when the growling winds contend, and all
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm,
To sink in warm repose and hear the din
Howl o'er the steady battlements delights
Above the luxury of vulgar sleep!
The murm'ring riv'let and the hoarser strain
Of waters rushing o'er the slipp'ry rocks
Will nightly lull you to ambrosial rest.
To please the fancy is no trifling good
Where health is study'd; for whatever moves
The mind with calm delight promotes the just
And nat'ral movements of th' harmonious frame.
Besides, the sportive brook for ever shakes
The trembling air that floats from hill to hill,
From vale to mountain, with incessant change
Of purest element, refreshing still
Your airy seat and uninfected gods.
Chiefly for this I praise the man who builds

¹ The wild rose, or that which grows on the common briar.

Its balmy nature; virulent and thin
It grows, and now, but that a thousand gates
Are open to its flight, it would destroy
The parts it cherish'd and repair'd before.
Besides, the flexible and tender tubes
Melt in the mildest most nectareous tide
That rip'ning Nature rolls, as in the stream
Its crumbling banks; but what the vital force
Of plastic fluids hourly batters down,
That very force those plastic particles
Rebuild : so mutable the state of man !
For this the watchful appetite was giv'n
Daily with fresh materials to repair
This unavoidable expence of life,
This necessary waste of flesh and blood :
Hence the concoctive pow'rs with various art
Subdue the cruder aliments to chyle,
The chyle to blood, the foamy purple tide
To liquors, which through finer arteries
To diff'rent parts their winding course pursue
To try new changes and new forms put on,
Or for the public or some private use.

Nothing so foreign but th' athletic hind
Can labour into blood. The hungry meal
Alone he fears, or aliments too thin,
By violent pow'rs too easily subdu'd,
Too soon expell'd. His daily labour thaws
To friendly chyle the most rebellious mass
That salt can harden or the smoke of years ;
Nor does his gorge the luscious bacon rue,
Nor that which Cestria sends, tenacious paste
Of solid milk. But ye of softer clay,

Infirm and delicate, and ye who waste
With pale and bloated sloth the tedious day,
Avoid the stubborn aliment, avoid
The full repast, and let sagacious age
Grow wiser, lesson'd by the dropping teeth.

Half subtiliz'd to chyle the liquid food
Readiest obeys th' assimilating pow'rs,
And soon the tender vegetable mass
Relents, and soon the young of those that tread
The stedfast earth or cleave the green abyss
Or pathless sky. And if the steer must fall,
In youth and sanguine vigour let him die,
Nor stay till rigid age or heavy toils
Absolve him ill-requited from the yoke.
Some with high forage and luxuriant ease
Indulge the vet'ran ox ; but wiser thou
From the bald mountain or the barren downs
Expect the flocks by frugal nature fed,
A race of purer blood, with exercise
Refin'd and scanty fare ; for old or young
The stall'd are never healthy nor the cramm'd.
Not all the culinary arts can tame
To wholesome food th' abominable growth
Of rest and gluttony ; the prudent taste
Rejects like bane such loathsome lusciousness ;
The languid stomach curses ev'n the pure
Delicious fat, and all the race of oil,
For more the oily aliments relax
Its feeble tone, and with the eager lymph
(Fond to incorporate with all it meets)
Coyly they mix, and shun with slipp'ry wiles
The woo'd embrace. Th' irresoluble oil,

So gentle late and blandishing, in floods
Of rancid bile o'erflows : what tumults hence
What horrors rise were nauseous to relate.
Chuse leaner viands ye whose jovial make
Too fast the gummy nutriment imbibes ;
Chuse sober meals, and rouse to active life
Your cumbrous clay, nor on th' enfeebling down
Irresolute protract the morning hours :
But let the man whose bones are thinly clad
With cheerful ease and succulent repast
Improve his habit if he can ; for each
Extreme departs from perfect sanity.

I could relate what table this demands
Or that complexion, what the various pow'rs
Of various foods ; but fifty years would roll,
And fifty more, before the tale were done.
Besides, there often lurks some nameless, strange,
Peculiar thing, nor on the skin display'd,
Felt in the pulse, nor in the habit seen,
Which finds a poison in the food that most
The temp'ature affects. There are whose blood
Impetuous rages through the turgid veins,
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind
Than the moist melon or pale cucumber ;
Of chilly nature others fly the board
Supply'd with slaughter, and the vernal pow'rs
For cooler kinder sustenance implore :
Some ev'n the gen'rous nutriment detest
Which in the shell the sleeping embryo rears :
Some, more unhappy still, repent the gifts
Of Pales, soft, delicious, and benign,
The balmy quintessence of ev'ry flower,

And ev'ry grateful herb that decks the spring,
The fost'ring dew of tender sprouting life,
The best refection of declining age,
The kind restorative of those who lie
Half dead and panting, from the doubtful strife
Of nature struggling in the grasp of death.
Try all the bounties of this fertile globe,
There is not such a salutary food
As suits with ev'ry stomach : but (except
Amid the mingled mass of fish and fowl,
And boil'd and bak'd, you hesitate by which
You sunk oppress'd, or whether not by all)
Taught by experience soon you may discern
What pleases, what offends. Avoid the tastes
That lull the sicken'd appetite too long,
Or heave with fev'rish flushings all the face,
Burn in the palms, and parch the rough'ning tongue,
Or much diminish or too much increase
Th' expence which nature's wise economy
Without or waste or avarice maintains.
Such tastes abjur'd let prowling hunger loose,
And bid the curious palate roam at will;
They scarce can err amid the various stores
That burst the teeming entrails of the world.

Led by sagacious taste, the ruthless king
Of beasts on blood and slaughter only lives;
The tiger, form'd alike to cruel meals,
Would at the manger starve; of milder seeds
The gen'rous horse to herbage and to grain
Confines his wish, tho' fabling Greece resound
The Thracian steeds with human carnage wild.
Prompted by instinct's never-erring pow'r

Each creature knows its proper aliment;
But man, th' inhabitant of ev'ry clime,
With all the commoners of nature feeds.
Directed, bounded by this pow'r within
Their cravings are well aim'd : voluptuous man
Is by superior faculties misled,
Misled from pleasure ev'n in quest of joy.
Sated with nature's boons, what thousands seek,
With dishes tortur'd from their native taste,
And mad variety, to spur beyond
Its wiser will the jaded appetite!
Is this for pleasure? Learn a juster taste,
And know that temp'rance is true luxury :
Or is it pride? Pursue some nobler aim ;
Dismiss your parasites who praise for hire,
And earn the fair esteem of honest men
Whose praise is fame. Form'd of such clay as yours
The sick, the needy shiver at your gates :
Ev'n modest want may bless your hand unseen,
Tho' hush'd in patient wretchedness at home.
Is there no virgin grac'd with ev'ry charm
But that which binds the mercenary vow ?
No youth of genius whose neglected bloom
Unfoster'd sickens in the barren shade ?
No worthy man, by fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too gen'rous and humane,
Constrain'd to leave his happy natal seat,
And sigh for wants more bitter than his own ?
There are, while human miseries abound,
A thousand ways to waste superfluous wealth
Without one fool or flatt'rer at your board,
Without one hour of sickness or disgust.

But other ills th' ambiguous feast pursue
Beside provoking the lascivious taste.
Such various foods, tho' harmless each alone,
Each other violate, and oft we see
What strife is brew'd, and what pernicious bane
From combinations of innoxious things.
Th' unbounded taste I mean not to confine
To hermits' diet needlessly severe:
But would you long the sweets of health enjoy
Or husband pleasure? at one impious meal
Exhaust not half the bounties of the year
Of ev'ry realm. It matters not mean-while
How much to-morrow differ from to-day;
So far indulge: 'tis fit besides that man,
To change obnoxious, be to change inur'd:
But stay the curious appetite, and taste
With caution fruits you never try'd before:
For want of use the kindest aliment
Sometimes offends, while custom tames the rage
Of poison to mild amity with life.

So Heav'n has form'd us to the gen'ral taste
Of all its gifts, so custom has improv'd
This bent of nature, that few simple foods
Of all that earth, or air, or ocean yield,
But by excess offend. Beyond the sense
Of light refection at the genial board
Indulge not often, nor protract the feast
To dull satiety, till soft and slow
A drowsy death creeps on, th' expansive soul
Oppress'd, and smother'd the celestial fire.
The stomach urg'd beyond its active tone
Hardly to nutrimental chyle subdues

The softest food; unfinish'd and deprav'd
The chyle in all its future wand'rings owns
Its turbid fountain, not by purer streams
So to be clear'd but foulness will remain.
To sparkling wine what ferment can exalt
Th' unripen'd grape! or what mechanic skill
From the crude ore can spin the ductile gold?

Gross riot treasures up a wealthy fund
Of plagues, but more immedicable ills
Attend the lean extreme; for physic knows
How to disburden the too tumid veins,
Ev'n how to ripen the half-labour'd blood;
But to unlock the elemental tubes
Collaps'd and shrunk with long inanity,
And with balsamic nutriment repair
The dry'd and worn-out habit, were to bid
Old age grow green and wear a second spring,
Or the tall ash, long ravish'd from the soil,
Through wither'd veins imbibe the vernal dew.
When hunger calls, obey, nor often wait
Till hunger sharpen to corrosive pain;
For the keen appetite will feast beyond
What nature well can bear, and one extreme
Ne'er without danger meets its own reverse.
Too greedily th' exhausted veins absorb
The recent chyle, and load enfeebled pow'rs
Oft to th' extinction of the vital flame.
To the pale cities by the firm-set siege
And famine humbled may this verse be borne!
And hear, ye hardiest sons that Albion breeds,
Long toss'd and famish'd on the wintry main!
The war shook off, or hospitable shore

Attain'd, with temp'rance bear the shock of joy,
Nor crown with festive rites th' auspicious day:
Such feast might prove more fatal than the waves,
Than war or famine. While the vital fire
Burns feebly, heap not the green fuel on,
But prudently foment the wand'ring spark
With what the soonest feeds its kindred touch.
Be frugal ev'n of that: a little give
At first; that kindled, add a little more;
Till, by delib'rate nourishing, the flame
Reviv'd with all its wonted vigour glows.

But tho' the two, the full and the jejune
Extremes have each their vice, it much avails
Ever with gentle tide to ebb and flow
From this to that; so nature learns to bear
Whatever chance or headlong appetite
May bring. Besides, a meager day subdues
The cruder clods by sloth or luxury
Collected, and unloads the wheels of life.
Sometimes a coy aversion to the feast
Comes on while yet no blacker omen low'rs;
Then is the time to shun the tempting board
Were it your natal or your nuptial day:
Perhaps a fast so seasonable starves
The latent seeds of woe which, rooted once,
Might cost you labour: but the day return'd
Of festal luxury the wise indulge
Most in the tender vegetable breed;
Then, chiefly when the summer beams inflame
The brazen heav'ns, or angry Sirius sheds
A fev'rish taint through the still gulf of air,
The moist cool viands then, and flowing cup

From the fresh dairy-virgin's lib'ral hand,
Will save your head from harm tho' round the
world

The dreaded Causos¹ roll his wasteful fires.
Pale humid Winter loves the gen'rous board,
The meal more copious, and a warmer fare,
And longs with old wood and old wine to cheer
His quaking heart. The seasons which divide
Th' empires of heat and cold, by neither claim'd,
Influenc'd by both, a middle regimen
Impose. Through autumn's languishing domain
Descending nature by degrees invites
To glowing luxury; but from the depth
Of winter when th' invigorated year
Emerges, when Favonius flush'd with love,
Toyful and young, in ev'ry breeze descends
More warm and wanton on his kindling bride,
Then, shepherds, then begin to spare your flocks,
And learn with wise humanity to check
The lust of blood. Now pregnant earth commits
A various offspring to th' indulgent sky;
Now bounteous nature feeds with lavish hand
The prone creation, yields what once suffic'd
Their dainty sov'reign when the world was young,
Ere yet the barb'rous thirst of blood had seiz'd
The human breast. Each rolling month matures
The food that suits it most; so does each clime.
Far in the horrid realms of winter, where
Th' establish'd ocean heaps a monstrous waste
Of shining rocks and mountains to the pole,

¹ The burning fever.

There lives a hardy race, whose plainest wants
Relentless earth, their cruel stepmother,
Regards not. On the waste of iron fields
Untam'd, intractable, no harvests wave;
Pomona hates them, and the clownish god
Who tends the garden. In this frozen world
Such cooling gifts were vain; a fitter meal
Is earn'd with ease, for here the fruitful spawn
Of ocean swarms, and heaps their genial board
With gen'rous fare and luxury profuse.
These are their bread, the only bread they know,
These, and their willing slave, the deer that crops
The shrubby herbage on their meager hills.
Girt by the burning zone not thus the South
Her swarthy sons in either Ind maintains,
Or thirsty Libya, from whose fervid loins
The lion bursts and ev'ry fiend that roams
Th' affrighted wilderness. The mountain herd
Aust and dry no sweet repast affords,
Nor does the tepid main such kinds produce,
So perfect, so delicious, as the shoals
Of icy Zembla. Rashly, where the blood
Brews fev'rish frays, where scarce the tubes sustain
Its tumid fervour and tempestuous course,
Kind nature tempts not to such gifts as these:
But here in livid rip'ness melts the grape,
Here, finish'd by invigorating suns,
Through the green shades the golden orange glows;
Spontaneous here the turgid melon yields
A gen'rous pulp; the coco swells on high
With milky riches, and in horrid mail
The crisp ananas wraps its poignant sweets,

Earth's vaunted progeny, in ruder air
Too coy to flourish, ev'n too proud to live,
Or hardly rais'd by artificial fire
To vapid life : here with a mother's smile
Glad Amalthea pours her copious horn;
Here buxom Ceres reigns; th'autumnal sea
In boundless billows fluctuates o'er their plains.
What suits the climate best, what suits the men,
Nature profuses most, and most the taste
Demands. The fountain edg'd with racy wine
Or acid fruit bedews their thirsty souls;
The breeze eternal breathing round their limbs
Supports in else intolerable air,
While the cool palm, the plantain, and the grove
That waves on gloomy Lebanon, assuage
The torrid hell that beams upon their heads.

Now come, ye Naiads! to the fountains lead!
Now let me wander through your gelid reign!
I burn to view th'enthusiastic wilds
By mortal else untrod. I hear the din
Of waters thund'ring o'er the ruin'd cliffs;
With holy rev'rence I approach the rocks
Whence glide the streams renown'd in ancient song!
Here from the desert down the rumbling steep
First springs the Nile; here bursts the sounding Po
In angry waves; Euphrates hence devolves
A mighty flood to water half the East;
And there in Gothic solitude reclin'd
The cheerless Tanais pours his hoary urn.
What solemn twilight! What stupendous shades
Inwrap these infant floods! Through ev'ry nerve
A sacred horror thrills!—A pleasing fear

Glides o'er my frame! The forest deepens round,
And more gigantic still th' impending trees
Stretch their extrav'gant arms athwart the gloom!
Are these the confines of some fairy world,
A land of Genii? Say, beyond these wilds
What unknown nations! if indeed beyond
Aught habitable lies; and whither leads,
To what strange regions or of bliss or pain,
That subterraneous way! Propitious Maids!
Conduct me while with fearful steps I tread
This trembling ground! The task remains to sing
Your gifts (so Pæon, so the pow'rs of Health
Command) to praise your crystal element,
The chief ingredient in Heav'n's various works,
Whose flexile genius sparkles in the gem,
Grows firm in oak, and fugitive in wine,
The vehicle, the source of nutriment
And life to all that vegetate or live.

O comfortable streams! with eager lips
And trembling hand the languid thirsty quaff
New life in you; fresh vigour fills their veins.
No warmer cups the rural ages knew,
None warmer sought the Sires of human kind:
Happy in temp'rate peace their equal days
Felt not th' alternate fits of fev'rish mirth
And sick dejection: still serene and pleas'd
They knew no pains but what the tender soul
With pleasure yields to, and would ne'er forget:
Blest with divine immunity from ails
Long centuries they liv'd; their only fate
Was ripe old age, and rather sleep than death.
Oh! could those worthies from the world of gods.

Return to visit their degen'rate sons,
How would they scorn the joys of modern time,
With all our art and toil improv'd to pain!
Too happy they!—but wealth brought luxury;
And luxury on sloth begot disease.

Learn temp'rance, friends, and hear without
disdain

The choice of water. Thus the Coan sage^{*}
Opin'd, and thus the learn'd of ev'ry school.
What least of foreign principles partakes
Is best; the lightest then what bears the touch
Of fire the least, and soonest mounts in air;
The most insipid, the most void of smell.
Such the rude mountain from his horrid sides
Pours down, such waters in the sandy vale
For ever boil, alike of winter frosts
And summer's heat secure. The crystal stream
Thro' rocks resounding oft for many a mile
O'er the chaf'd pebbles hurl'd, yields wholesome,
pure,

And mellow draughts, except when winter thaws,
And half the mountains melt into the tide.

Tho' thirst were e'er so resolute, avoid
The sordid lake, and all such drowsy floods
As fill from Lethe Belgia's slow canals
(With rest corrupt, with vegetation green,
Squalid with generation and the birth
Of little monsters) till the pow'r of fire
Has from profane embraces disengag'd
The violated lymph. The virgin stream
In boiling wastes its finer soul in air.

^{*} Hippocrates.

Nothing like simple element dilutes
The food, or gives the chyle so soon to flow:
But where the stomach, indolent and cold,
Toys with its duty, animate with wine
Th' insipid stream, tho' golden Ceres yields
A more voluptuous, a more sprightly draught,
Perhaps more active: wine unmix'd, and all
The gluey floods that from the vex'd abyss
Of fermentation spring, with spirit fraught,
And furious with intoxicating fire,
Retard concoction, and preserve unthaw'd
Th' embody'd mass. You see what countless years,
Embalm'd in fiery quintessence of wine,
The puny wonders of the reptile world,
The tender rudiments of life, the slim
Unrav'lings of minute anatomy,
Maintain their texture and unchang'd remain.

We curse not wine; the vile excess we blame,
More fruitful than th' accumulated board
Of pain and mis'ry; for the subtle draught
Faster and surer swells the vital tide
And with more active poison than the floods
Of grosser crudity convey, pervades
The far remote meanders of our frame.
Ah! sly deceiver! branded o'er and o'er,
Yet still believ'd! exulting o'er the wreck
Of sober vows!—But the Parnassian Maids
Another time perhaps shall sing the joys,
The fatal charms, the many woes of wine,
Perhaps its various tribes and various pow'rs. *

* See Book IV.

Meantime I would not always dread the bowl,
Nor ev'ry trespass shun. The fev'rish strife
Rous'd by the rare debauch subdues, expels
The loit'ring crudities that burden life,
And like a torrent full and rapid clears
Th' obstructed tubes. Besides, this restless world
Is full of chances, which by habit's pow'r
To learn to bear is easie, than to shun.
Ah! when ambition, meager love of gold,
Or sacred country calls, with mellowing wine
To moisten well the thirsty suffrages,
Say how, unseason'd to the midnight frays
Of Comus and his rout, wilt thou contend
With Centaurs long to hardy deeds inur'd!
Then learn to revel, but by slow degrees;
By slow degrees the lib'ral arts are won,
And Hercules grew strong. But when you smooth
The brows of Care indulge your festive vein
In cups by well inform'd experience found
The least your bane, and only with your friends.
There are sweet follies, frailties to be seen
By friends alone and men of gen'rous minds.
Oh! seldom may the fated hours return
Of drinking deep! I would not daily taste,
Except when life declines, ev'n sober cups.
Weak with'ring age no rigid law forbids
With frugal nectar smooth and slow, with baln
The sapless habit daily to bedew,
And give the hesitating wheels of life
Gliblier to play: but youth has better joys;
And is it wise, when youth with pleasure flows,
To squander the reliefs of age and pain?

What dext'rous thousands just within the goal
Of wild debauch direct their nightly course!
Perhaps no sickly qualms bedim their days;
No morning admonitions shock the head—
But ah! what woes remain! Life rolls apace,
And that incurable disease, old age,
In youthful bodies more severely felt,
More sternly active, shakes their blasted prime;
Except kind nature by some hasty blow
Prevent the ling'ring fates: for know, whate'er
Beyond its nat'ral fervour hurries on
The sanguine tide, whether the frequent bowl,
High-season'd fare, or exercise to toil
Protracted, spurs to its last stage tir'd life,
And sows the temples with untimely snow.
When life is new the ductile fibres feel
The heart's increasing force, and day by day
The growth advances, till the larger tubes
Acquiring (from their ¹ elemental veins
Condens'd to solid chords) a firmer tone,
Sustain, and just sustain, th' impetuous blood:

¹ In the human body, as well as in those of other animals, the large blood vessels are composed of smaller ones, which by the violent motion and pressure of the fluids in the larger vessels lose their cavities by degrees and degenerate into impervious chords or fibres. In proportion as these small vessels become solid the larger must of course grow less extensible, more rigid, and make a stronger resistance to the action of the heart and force of the blood. From this gradual condensation of the smaller vessels, and consequent rigidity of the larger ones, the progress of the human body from infancy to old age is accounted for.

Here stops the growth. With overbearing pulse
And pressure still the great destroy the small,
Still with the ruins of the small grow strong:
Life glows meantime amid the grinding force
Of viscous fluids and elastic tubes;
Its various functions vig'rously are ply'd
By strong machin'ry, and in solid health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er disease.
But the full ocean ebbs: there is a point
By nature fix'd whence life must downward tend;
For still the beating tide consolidates
The stubborn vessels more reluctant still
To the weak throbs of th' ill-supported heart:
This languishing, these strength'ning, by degrees
To hard unyielding unelastic bone
Through tedious channels the congealing flood
Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on;
It loiters still, and now it stirs no more.
This is the period few attain, the death
Of nature. Thus (so heav'n ordain'd it) life
Destroys itself; and could these laws have chang'd
Nestor might now the fate of Troy relate,
And Homer live immortal as his song.
What does not fade! The tow'r, that long had stood
The crush of thunder and the warring winds,
Shook by the slow, but sure destroyer, Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base;
And flinty pyramids and walls of brass
Descend. The Babylonian spires are sunk:
Achaia, Rome and Egypt, moulder down.
Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
And tott'ring empires rush by their own weight.

This huge rotundity we tread grows old,
And all those worlds that roll around the Sun,
The Sun himself shall die, and ancient Night
Again involve the desolate Abyss,
Till the great Father through the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws ;
For through the regions of unbounded space
Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
Being in various systems fluctuates still
Between creation and abhorr'd decay ;
It ever did, perhaps, and ever will :
New worlds are still emerging from the deep,
The old descending in their turns to rise.

BOOK III.

EXERCISE.

THROUGH various toils th' advent'rous Muse
has past,
But half the toil, and more than half, remains.
Rude is her theme, and hardly fit for song,
Plain, and of little ornament, and I
But little practis'd in th' Aonian arts :
Yet not in vain such labours have we try'd
If aught these lays the fickle health confirm.
To you, ye Delicate ! I write ; for you
I tame my youth to philosophic cares,
And grow still paler by the midnight lamps.
Not to debilitate with tim'rous rules
A hardy frame, nor needlessly to brave

Unglorious dangers, proud of mortal strength,
Is all the lesson that in wholesome years
Concerns the strong. His care were ill bestow'd
Who would with warm effeminacy nurse
The thriving oak which on the mountain's brow
Bears all the blasts that sweep the wintry heav'n.

Behold the lab'rer of the glebe who toils
In dust, in rain, in cold and sultry skies—
Save but the grain from mildews and the flood
Nought anxious he what sickly stars ascend.
He knows no laws by *Æsculapius* giv'n,
He studies none; yet him nor midnight fogs
Infest, nor those envenom'd shafts that fly
When rapid *Sirius* fires th' autumnal noon.
His habit pure with plain and temp'rate meals,
Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd
To ev'ry casualty of vary'd life:
Serene he bears the peevish eastern blast,
And uninfected breathes the mortal South:
Such the reward of rude and sober life,
Of labour such. By health the peasant's toil
Is well repaid; if exercise were pain
Indeed, and temp'rance pain. By arts like these
Laconia nurs'd of old her hardy sons,
And *Rome's* unconquer'd legions urg'd their way,
Unhurt, through ev'ry toil in ev'ry clime.

Toil and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves
Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone;
The greener juices are by toil subdu'd,
Mellow'd, and subtiliz'd; the vapid cold
Expell'd and all the rancour of the blood.
Come, my companions! ye who feel the charms

Of nature and the year, come, let us stray
Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk!
Come, while the soft voluptuous breezes fan
The fleecy heav'ns, inwrap the limbs in balm,
And shed a charming languor o'er the soul;
Nor when bright Winter sows with prickly frost
The vig'rous Ether in unmanly warmth
Indulge at home, nor ev'n when Eurys' blasts
This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.
My lib'ral walks, save when the skies in rain
Or fogs relent, no season should confine
Or to the cloister'd gall'ry or arcade.
Go climb the mountain; from th' ethereal source
Imbibe the recent gale. The cheerful Morn
Beams o'er the hills; go mount th' exulting steed;
Already see the deep-mouth'd beagles catch
The tainted mazes, and on eager sport
Intent with emulous impatience try
Each doubtful trace: or if a nobler prey
Delight you more, go chase the desp'rate deer,
And through its deepest solitudes awake
The vocal forest with thē jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale
Exceed your strength, a sport of less fatigue,
Not less delightful, the prolific stream
Affords. The crystal rivulet that o'er
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze
Swarms with the silver fry: such through the bounds
Of past'ral Stafford runs the brawling Trent;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such
The Esk, o'erhung with woods; and such the stream
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,

Liddal, till now, except in Doric lays
Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,
Unknown in song, tho' not a purer stream
Through meads more flow'ry or more romantic
groves

Rolls toward the western main. Hail sacred flood!
May still thy hospitable swains be blest
In rural innocence; thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish, and thy vales look gay
With painted meadows and the golden grain!
Oft with thy blooming sons, when life was new
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd;
Oft trac'd with patient steps thy fairy banks
With the well-imitated fly to hook
The eager trout, and with the slender line
And yielding rod solicit to the shore
The struggling panting prey, while vernal clouds
And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool,
And from the deeps called forth the wanton swarms.

Form'd on the Samian school or those of Ind,
There are who think these pastimes scarce humane:
Yet in my mind (and not relentless I)
His life is pure that wears no fouler stains.
But if through genuine tenderness of heart,
Or secret want of relish for the game,
You shun the glories of the chase, nor care
To haunt the peopled stream, the garden yields
A soft amusement and humane delight.
To raise th' insipid nature of the ground,
Or tame its savage genius to the grace

Of careless sweet rusticity, that seems
The amiable result of happy chance,
Is to create, and gives a godlike joy
Which ev'ry year improves. Nor thou disdain
To check the lawless riot of the trees,
To plant the grove, or turn the barren mould.
O happy he, whom when his years decline
(His fortune and his fame by worthy means
Attain'd and equal to his mod'rate mind,
His life approv'd by all the wise and good,
Ev'n envy'd by the vain) the peaceful groves
Of Epicurus from this stormy world
Receive to rest, of all ungrateful cares
Absolv'd, and sacred from the selfish crowd!
Happiest of men! if the same soil invites
A chosen few, companions of his youth,
Once fellow-rakes perhaps, now rural friends,
With whom in easy commerce to pursue
Nature's free charms, and vie for sylvan fame;
A fair ambition, void of strife or guile,
Or jealousy or pain to be outdone;
Who plans th' enchanted garden, who directs
The visto best, and best conducts the stream,
Whose groves the fastest thicken and ascend,
Whom first the welcome Spring salutes, who shews
The earliest bloom, the sweetest proudest charms
Of Flora, who best gives Pomona's juice
To match the sprightly genius of Champaign.
Thrice happy days in rural bus'ness past!
Blest winter nights! when, as the genial fire
Cheers the wide hall, his cordial family
With soft domestic arts the hours beguile,

And pleasing talk that starts no tim'rous fame
With witless wantonness to hunt it down ;
Or through the fairy-land of tale or song
Delighted wander, in fictitious fates
Engag'd, and all that strikes humanity,
Till lost in fable they the stealing hour
Of timely rest forget. Sometimes at eve
His neighbours lift the latch, and bless unbid
His festal roof, while o'er the light repast
And sprightly cups they mix in social joy,
And through the maze of conversation trace
Whate'er amuses or improves the mind.
Sometimes at eve (for I delight to taste
The native zest and flavour of the fruit
Where sense grows wild and tastes of no manure)
The decent, honest, cheerful husbandman
Should drown his labours in my friendly bowl,
And at my table find himself at home.

Whate'er you study, in whate'er you sweat,
Indulge your taste. Some love the manly foils,
The tennis some, and some the graceful dance.
Others more hardy range the purple heath
Or naked stubble, where from field to field
The sounding covies urge their lab'ring flight,
Eager amid the rising cloud to pour
The gun's unerring thunder; and there are
Whom still the meed ¹ of the green archer charms.
He chuses best whose labour entertains
His vacant fancy most : the toil you hate

¹ This word is much used by some of the old English poets, and signifies reward or prize.

Fatigues you soon, and scarce improves your limbs.

As beauty still has blemish, and the mind
The most accomplish'd its imperfect side,
Few bodies are there of that happy mould
But some one part is weaker than the rest;
The legs perhaps or arms refuse their load,
Or the chest labours : these assiduously
But gently in their proper arts employ'd
Acquire a vigour and activity
To which they were not born : but weaker parts
Abhor fatigue and vi'lent discipline.

Begin with gentle toils, and, as your nerves
Grow firm, to hardier by just steps aspire.
The prudent ev'n in ev'ry mod'rate walk
At first but saunter, and by slow degrees
Increase their pace. This doctrine of the wise
Well knows the master of the flying steed.
First from the goal the manag'd coursers play
On bended reins ; as yet the skilful youth
Repress their foamy pride ; but ev'ry breath
The race grows warmer, and the tempest swells
Till all the fiery mettle has its way,
And the thick thunder hurries o'er the plain.
When all at once from indolence to toil
You spring, the fibres by the hasty shock
Are tir'd and crack'd before their unctuous coats
Compress'd can pour the lubricating balm.
Besides, collected in the passive veins
The purple mass a sudden torrent rolls,
O'erpow'rs the heart and deluges the lungs
With dang'rous inundation ; oft the source
Of fatal woes, a cough that foams with blood,

Asthma and feller peripneumony,^{*}
Or the slow minings of the hectic fire.

Th' athletic fool, to whom what heav'n deny'd
Of soul is well compensated in limbs,
Oft from his rage or brainless frolic feels
His vegetation and brute force decay.
The men of better clay and finer mould
Know nature, feel the human dignity,
And scorn to vie with oxen or with apes.
Pursu'd proluxly ev'n the gentlest toil
Is waste of health : repose by small fatigue
Is earn'd, and (where your habit is not prone
To thaw) by the first moisture of the brows.
The fine and subtile spirits cost too much
To be profus'd, too much the roscid balm :
But when the hard varieties of life
You toil to learn, or try the dusty chase,
Or the warm deeds of some important day,
Hot from the field indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose, nor court the fanning gale,
Nor taste the spring. Oh! by the sacred tears
Of widows, orphans, mothers, sisters, sires,
Forbear! No other pestilence has driv'n
Such myriads o'er th' irremeable deep.
Why this so fatal the sagacious Muse
Through nature's cunning labyrinths could trace;
But there are secrets which who knows not now
Must ere he reach them climb the heapy Alps
Of science, and devote sev'n years to toil.
Besides, I would not stun your patient ears
With what it little boots you to attain.

^{*} The inflammation of the lungs.

He knows enough, the mariner, who knows
Where lurk the shelves, and where the whirlpools boil;
What signs portend the storm : to subtler minds
He leaves to scan from what mysterious cause
Charybdis rages in th' Ionian wave;
Whence those impetuous currents in the main
Which neither oar nor sail can stem, and why
The rough'ning deep expects the storm as sure
As red Orion mounts the shrouded heav'n.

In ancient times, when Rome with Athens vy'd
For polish'd luxury and useful arts,
All hot and reeking from th' Olympic strife
And warm Palestra, in the tepid bath
Th' athletic youth relax'd their weary limbs;
Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful pow'rs
Of Nard and Cassia fraught, to sooth and heal
The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime
Not much invites us to such arts as these.
'Tis not for those whom gelid skies embrace
And chilling fogs, whose perspiration feels
Such frequent bars from Eurys and the North,
'Tis not for those to cultivate a skin
Too soft, or teach the recremental fume
Too fast to crowd through such precarious ways;
For through the small arterial mouths that pierce
In endless millions the close-woven skin
The baser fluids in a constant stream
Escape, and viewless melt into the winds:
While this eternal, this most copious waste
Of blood, degen'rate into vapid brine,
Maintains its wonted measure, all the pow'rs
Of health befriend you, all the wheels of life

With ease and pleasure move; but this restrain'd
Or more or less, so more or less you feel
The functions labour : from this fatal source
What woes descend is never to be sung :
To take their numbers were to count the sands
That ride in whirlwind the parch'd Libyan air,
Or waves that, when the blust'ring North embroils
The Baltic, thunder on the German shore.
Subject not then by soft emollient arts
This grand expence on which your fates depend
To ev'ry caprice of the sky, nor thwart
The genius of your clime; for from the blood
Least fickle rise the recremental steams,
And least obnoxious to the styptic air,
Which breathe through straiter and more callous
pores:

The temper'd Scythian hence half-naked treads
His boundless snows nor rues th' inclement heav'n,
And hence our painted ancestors defy'd
The East, nor curs'd like us their fickle sky.
The body moulded by the clime endures
Th' Equator heats or Hyperborean frost,
Except by habits foreign to its turn
Unwise you counteract its forming pow'r.
Rude at the first the winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance : study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun.
Against the rigours of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies some frequent
The gelid cistern, and where nought forbids
I praise their dauntless heart ; a frame so steel'd

Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts
That breathe the tertian or fell rheumatism;
The nerves so temper'd never quit their tone;
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts;
But all things have their bounds; and he who makes
By daily use the kindest regimen
Essential to his health, should never mix
With human kind, nor art nor trade pursue:
He not the safe vicissitudes of life
Without some shock endures; ill fitted he
To want the known or bear unusual things.
Besides, the pow'rful remedies of pain
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)
Should never with your prosp'rous days of health
Grow too familiar; for by frequent use
The strongest med'cines lose their healing pow'r,
And ev'n the surest poisons theirs to kill.

Let those who from the frozen Arctos reach
Parch'd Mauritania or the sultry West,
Or the wide flood that laves rich Indostan,
Plunge thrice a day, and in the tepid wave
Untwist their stubborn pores, that full and free
Th' evaporation through the soften'd skin
May bear proportion to the swelling blood;
So may they 'scape the fever's rapid flames,
So feel untainted the hot breath of hell.
With us the man of no complaint demands
The warm ablution, just enough to clear
The sluices of the skin, enough to keep
The body sacred from indecent soil.
Still to be pure, ev'n did it not conduce
(As much it does) to health, were greatly worth

Your daily pains : 'tis this adorns the rich ;
The want of this is poverty's worst woe ;
With this external virtue age maintains
A decent grace ; without it youth and charms
Are loathsome : this the genial graces know,
So doubtless do your wives ; for marry'd sires
As well as lovers still pretend to taste :
Nor is it less (all prudent wives can tell)
To lose a husband's than a lover's heart.

But now the hours and seasons when to toil
From foreign themes recall my wand'ring song.
Some labour fasting, or but slightly fed,
To lull the grinding stomach's hungry rage ;
Where nature feeds too corpulent a frame
'Tis wisely done ; for while the thirsty veins,
Impatient of lean penury, devour
The treasur'd oil, then is the happiest time
To shake the lazy balsam from its cells.
Now while the stomach from the full repast
Subsides, but ere returning hunger gnaws,
Ye, leaner habits, give an hour to toil,
And ye, whom no luxuriancy of growth
Oppresses yet or threatens to oppress :
But from the recent meal no labours please
Of limbs or mind ; for now the cordial pow'rs
Claim all the wand'ring spirits to a work
Of strong and subtile toil and great event,
A work of time ; and you may rue the day
You hurry'd with untimely exercise
A half-concocted chyle into the blood.
The body overcharg'd with unctuous phlegm
Much toil demands, the lean elastic less.

While winter chills the blood and binds the veins
No labours are too hard : by those you 'scape
The slow diseases of the torpid year
Endless to name, to one of which alone,
To that which tears the nerves, the toil of slaves
Is pleasure. Oh ! from such inhuman pains
May all be free who merit not the Wheel !
But from the burning Lion when the Sun
Pours down his sultry wrath, now while the blood
Too much already maddens in the veins,
And all the finer fluids through the skin
Explore their flight, ne near the cool cascade
Reclin'd, or saunt'ring in the lofty grove,
No needless slight occasion should engage
To pant and sweat beneath the fiery noon :
Now the fresh morn alone and mellow eve
To shady walks and active rural sports
Invite ; but while the chilling dews descend
May nothing tempt you to the cold embrace
Of humid skies, tho' 'tis no vulgar joy
To trace the horrors of the solemn wood
While the soft ev'ning saddens into night,
Tho' the sweet poet of the vernal groves
Melts all the night in strains of am'rous woe.

The shades descend, and midnight o'er the world
Expands her sable wings ; great Nature droops
Through all her works : now happy he whose toil
Has o'er his languid pow'rless limbs diffus'd
A pleasing lassitude ! He not in vain
Invokes the gentle Deity of dreams :
His pow'rs the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose ; on him the balmy dews

Of sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion, or on Fancy's wings
Visit the Paradise of happy dreams,
And waken cheerful as the lively Morn?
Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full,
But be the first concoction half-matur'd
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toil
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires whom trembling from the tow'r that rocks
Amid the clouds of Calpe's hideous height
The busy demons hurl, or in the Main
O'erwhelm, or bury struggling under ground.
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes
Can counterpoise of that most wretched man
Whose nights are shaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Orestes, whose delirious brain,
Stung by the Furies, works with poison'd thought,
While pale and monstrous painting shocks the soul,
And mangled Consciousness bemoans itself
For ever torn, and chaos floating round.
What dreams presage, what dangers these or those
Portend to sanity, tho' prudent Seers
Reveal'd of old and men of deathless fame,
We would not to the superstitious mind
Suggest new throbs, new vanities of fear:
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To banish omens and all restless woes.

In study some protract the silent hours,
Which others consecrate to mirth and wine,

And sleep till noon, and hardly live till night.
But surely this redeems not from the shades
One hour of life. Nor does it aught avail
What season you to drowsy Morpheus give
Of th' ever-varying circle of the day ;
Or whether through the tedious winter gloom
You tempt the midnight or the morning damps :
The body fresh and vig'rous from repose
Defies the early fogs, but by the toils
Of wakeful day exhausted and unstrung
Weakly resists the night's unwholesome breath.
The grand discharge, th' effusion of the skin,
Slowly impair'd, the languid maladies
Creep on, and through the sick'ning functions steal ;
As when the chilling East invades the spring
The delicate Narcissus pines away
In hectic languor, and a slow disease
Taints all the family of flow'rs, condemn'd
To cruel heav'ns. But why, already prone
To fade, should beauty cherish its own bane ?
Oh ! shame ! Oh ! pity ! Nipt with pale quadrille
And midnight cares the bloom of Albion dies.

By toil subdu'd, the warrior and the hind
Sleep fast and deep ; their active functions soon
With gen'rous streams the subtile tubes supply ;
And soon the tonic irritable nerves
Feel the fresh impulse and awake the soul.
The sons of indolence with long repose
Grow torpid ; and with slowest Lethe drunk
Feebly and ling'ringly return to life,
Blunt ev'ry sense and pow'rless ev'ry limb.
Ye prone to sleep ! (whom sleeping most annoys)

The hardest frame! Of indolence, of toil,
We die; of want, of superfluity.
The all-surrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death: and tho' the putrid South
Be shut, tho' no convulsive agony
Shake from the deep foundations of the world
Th' imprison'd plagues, a secret venom oft
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land.
What livid deaths has sad Byzantium seen!
How oft has Cairo with a mother's woe
Wept o'er her slaughter'd sons and lonely streets!
Ev'n Albion, girt with less malignant skies,
Albion the poison of the gods has drunk,
And felt the sting of monsters all her own.

Ere yet the fell Plantagenets had spent
Their ancient rage at Bosworth's purple field,
While for which tyrant England should receive
Her legions in incestuous murders mix'd
And daily horrors, till the Fates were drunk
With kindred-blood by kindred-hands profus'd,
Another plague of more gigantic arm
Arose, a monster, never known before,
Rear'd from Cocytus its portentous head;
This rapid fury not like other pests
Pursu'd a gradual course, but in a day
Rush'd as a storm o'er half th' astonish'd isle,
And strew'd with sudden carcasses the land.

First through the shoulders, or whatever part
Was seiz'd the first, a fervid vapour sprang;
With rash combustion thence the quiv'ring spark
Shot to the heart, and kindled all within,
And soon the surface caught the spreading fires:

Through all the yielding pores the melted blood
Gush'd out in smoky sweats; but nought assuag'd
The torrid heat within, nor aught reliev'd
The stomach's anguish. With incessant toil,
Desp'rate of ease, impatient of their pain,
They toss'd from side to side. In vain the stream
Ran full and clear; they burnt and thirsted still.
The restless arteries with rapid blood
Beat strong and frequent: thick and pantingly
The breath was fetch'd, and with huge lab'rings
heav'd.

At last a heavy pain oppress'd the head;
A wild delirium came: their weeping friends
Were strangers now, and this no home of theirs.
Harrass'd with toil on toil the sinking pow'rs
Lay prostrate and o'erthrown: a pond'rous sleep
Wrapt all the senses up—They slept and dy'd.

In some a gentle horror crept at first
O'er all the limbs: the sluices of the skin
Withheld their moisture, till by art provok'd
The sweats o'erflow'd, but in a clammy tide,
Now free and copious, now restrain'd and slow,
Of tinctures various as the temp'ature,
And mix'd the blood, and rank with fetid steams,
As if the pent-up humours by delay
Were grown more fell, more putrid and malign.
Here lay their hopes (tho' little hope remain'd)
With full effusion of perpetual sweats
To drive the venom out: and here the Fates
Were kind, that long they linger'd not in pain;
For who surviv'd the Sun's diurnal race
Rose from the dreary gates of hell redeem'd,

On the hard mattress or elastic couch
Extend your limbs, and wean yourselves from sloth;
Nor grudge the lean projector of dry brain
And springy nerves the blandishments of down,
Nor envy while the bury'd Bacchanal
Exhales his surfeit in prolixer dreams.

He without riot in the balmy feast
Of life the wants of nature has supply'd
Who rises cool, serene, and full of soul.
But pliant nature more or less demands
As custom forms her, and all sudden change
She hates of habit ev'n from bad to good.
If faults in life or new emergencies
From habits urge you by long time confirm'd,
Slow may the change arrive, and stage by stage,
Slow as the shadow o'er the dial moves,
Slow as the stealing progress of the year.

Observe the circling year, how unperceiv'd
Her seasons change! Behold by slow degrees
Stern winter tam'd into a ruder spring:
The ripen'd spring a milder summer glows,
Departing summer sheds Pomona's store,
And aged autumn brews the winter storm.
Slow as they come these changes come not void
Of mortal shocks: the cold and torrid reigns,
The two great periods of th' important year
Are in their first approaches seldom safe:
Funereal autumn all the sickly dread,
And the black Fates deform the lovely spring.
He well advis'd who taught our wiser Sires
Early to borrow Muscovy's warm spoils
Ere the first frost has touch'd the tender blade,

And late resign them, tho' the wanton Spring
Should deck her charms with all her sister's rays:
For while th' effluence of the skin maintains
Its native measure the pleuritic Spring
Glides harmless by; and Autumn, sick to death
With sallow quartans, no contagion breathes.

I in prophetic numbers could unfold
The omens of the year, what seasons teem
With what diseases, what the humid South
Prepares, and what the demon of the East;
But you perhaps refuse the tedious song.
Besides, whatever plagues in heat or cold
Or drought or moisture dwell, they hurt not you,
Skill'd to correct the vices of the sky,
And taught already how to each extreme
To bend your life. But should the public bane
Infect you, or some trespass of your own,
Or flaw of nature hint mortality,
Soon as a not unpleasing horror glides
Along the spine through all your torpid limbs,
When first the head throbs, or the stomach feels
A sickly load, a weary pain the loins,
Be Celsus call'd: the Fates come rushing on;
The rapid Fates admit of no delay.
While wilful you, and fatally secure
Expect to-morrow's more auspicious Sun,
The growing pest, whose infancy was weak
And easy vanquish'd with triumphant sway
O'erpow'rs your life. For want of timely care
Millions have dy'd of medicable wounds.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd!
What slight neglects, what trivial faults, destroy

Some the sixth hour oppress'd and some the third.

Of many thousands few untainted 'scap'd,
Of those infected fewer 'scap'd alive;
Of those who liv'd some felt a second blow,
And whom the second spar'd a third destroy'd.
Frantic with fear, they sought by flight to shun
The fierce contagion. O'er the mournful land
Th' infected city pour'd her hurrying swarms;
Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her seats around
Th' infected country rush'd into the town.
Some sad at home, and in the desert some,
Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind.
In vain!—where'er they fled the Fates pursu'd.
Others with hopes more specious cross'd the main
To seek protection in far distant skies;
But none they found. It seem'd the gen'ral air
From pole to pole, from Atlas to the East,
Was then at enmity with English blood;
For but the race of England all were safe
In foreign climes; nor did this Fury taste
The foreign blood which England then contain'd.
Where should they fly? The circumambient heav'n
Involv'd them still, and ev'ry breeze was bane:
Where find relief? The salutary art
Was mute, and, startled at the new disease,
In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.
To Heav'n with suppliant rites they sent their pray'rs;
Heav'n heard them not. Of ev'ry hope depriv'd,
Fatigu'd with vain resources, and subdu'd
With woes resistless and enfeebling fear,
Passive they sunk beneath the weighty blow.
Nothing but lamentable sounds were heard,

Nor aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
 Infectious horror ran from face to face
 And pale despair. 'Twas all the bus'ness then
 To tend the sick and in their turns to die.
 In heaps they fell; and oft one bed, they say,
 The sick'ning, dying, and the dead contain'd.

Ye guardian gods, on whom the fates depend
 Of tott'ring Albion! ye eternal fires
 That lead through heav'n the wand'ring year! ye
 pow'rs

That o'er th' encircling elements preside!
 May nothing worse than what this age has seen
 Arrive! Enough abroad, enough at home
 Has Albion bled. Here a distemper'd Heav'n
 Has thinn'd her cities from those lofty cliffs
 That awe proud Gaul to Thule's wintry reign;
 While in the West beyond th' Atlantic foam
 Her bravest sons, keen for the fight, have dy'd
 The death of cowards and of common men,
 Sunk void of wounds, and fall'n without renown.

But from these views the weeping Muses turn,
 And other themes invite my wand'ring song.

BOOK IV.

THE PASSIONS.

THE choice of Aliment, the choice of Air,
 The use of toil and all external things
 Already sung, it now remains to trace
 What good, what evil from ourselves proceed,
 And how the subtile principle within
 Inspires with health, or mines with strange decay.

The passive body. Ye poetic shades,
Who know the secrets of the world unseen,
Assist my song! for in a doubtful theme
Engag'd I wander through mysterious ways.

There is, they say, and I believe there is,
A spark within us of th' immortal fire
That animates and moulds the grosser frame,
And when the body sinks escapes to heav'n
Its native seat, and mixes with the gods:
Mean-while this heav'nly particle pervades
The mortal elements, in ev'ry nerve
It thrills with pleasure or grows mad with pain,
And in its secret conclave, as it feels
The body's woes and joys, this ruling pow'r
Wields at its will the dull material world,
And is the body's health or malady.

By its own toil the gross corporeal frame
Fatigues, extenuates, or destroys itself.
Nor less the labours of the mind corrode
The solid fabric; for by subtile parts
And viewless atoms secret nature moves
The mighty wheels of this stupendous world:
By subtile fluids pour'd through subtile tubes
The nat'ral vital functions are perform'd:
By these the stubborn aliments are tam'd,
The toiling heart distributes life and strength;
These the still-crumbling frame rebuild, and these
Are lost in thinking, and dissolve in air.

But 'tis not thought (for still the soul's employ'd)
'Tis painful thinking that corrodes our clay.
All day the vacant eye without fatigue
Strays o'er the heav'n and earth, but long intent

On microscopic arts its vigour fails.
Just so the mind with various thought amus'd
Nor akes itself nor gives the body pain ;
But anxious study, discontent, and care,
Love without hope, and hate without revenge,
And fear and jealousy fatigue the soul,
Engross the subtile ministers of life,
And spoil the lab'ring functions of their share :
Hence the lean gloom that melancholy wears,
'The lover's paleness, and the sallow hue
Of envy, jealousy, the meager stare
Of sore revenge : the canker'd body hence
Betrays each fretful motion of the mind.

The strong-built pedant, who both night and day
Feeds on the coarsest fare the schools bestow,
And crudely fattens at gross Burman's stall,
O'erwhelm'd with phlegm lies in a dropsy drown'd,
Or sinks in lethargy before his time.
With useful studies you and arts that please
Employ your mind ; amuse, but not fatigue.
Peace to each drowsy metaphysic sage !
And ever may all heavy systems rest !
Yet some there are ev'n of elastic parts
Whom strong and obstinate ambition leads
Through all the rugged roads of barren lore,
And gives to relish what their gen'rous taste
Would else refuse : but may nor thirst of fame
Nor love of knowledge urge you to fatigue
With constant drudgery the lib'ral soul !
Toy with your books ; and as the various fits
Of humour seize you, from philosophy
To fable shift ; from serious Antonine

To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song.

While reading pleases, but no longer, read;
And read aloud resounding Homer's strain,
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes;
The chest so exercis'd improves its strength,
And quick vibrations through the bowels drive
The restless blood, which in unactive days
Would loiter else through unelastic tubes.
Deem it not trifling while I recommend
What posture suits : to stand and sit by turns,
As nature prompts, is best; but o'er your leaves
To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machin'ry of its play.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind; for ever on pursuit
Of knowledge bent, it starves the grosser pow'rs :
Quite unemployed, against its own repose
It turns its fatal edge, and sharper pangs
Than what the body knows embitter life;
Chiefly where solitude, sad nurse of care!
To sickly musing gives the pensive mind,
There Madness enters; and the dim-ey'd Fiend,
Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
Her own eternal wound : the Sun grows pale;
A mournful visionary light o'erspreads
The cheerful face of nature; Earth becomes
A dreary desert, and Heav'n frowns above:
Then various shapes of curst illusion rise;
Whate'er the wretched fears creating fear
Forms out of nothing, and with monsters teems
Unknown in Hell. The prostrate soul beneath
A load of huge imagination heaves,

And all the horrors that the murd'rer feels
With anxious flutt'rings wake the guiltless breast.

Such phantoms pride in solitary scenes;
Or fear, or delicate self-love creates.
From other cares absolv'd, the busy mind
Finds in yourself a theme to pore upon;
It finds you miserable or makes you so:
For while yourself you anxiously explore
Tim'rous self-love, with sick'ning fancy's aid,
Presents the danger that you dread the most,
And ever galls you in your tender part:
Hence some for love, and some for jealousy,
For grim religion some, and some for pride,
Have lost their reason; some for fear of want
Want all their lives; and others ev'ry day
For fear of dying suffer worse than death.
Ah! from your bosoms banish, if you can,
Those fatal guests, and first the demon Fear
That trembles at impossible events
Lest aged Atlas should resign his load,
And Heav'n's eternal battlements rush down.
Is there an evil worse than fear itself?
And what avails it that indulgent Heav'n
From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come
If we ingenious to torment ourselves
Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own!
Enjoy the present, nor with needless cares
Of what may spring from blind misfortune's womb
Appal the surest hour that life bestows.
Serene, and master of yourself, prepare
For what may come, and leave the rest to Heav'n.

Oft from the body, by long ails mistun'd

These evils sprung the most important health,
That of the mind, destroy; and when the mind
They first invade, the conscious body soon
In sympathetic languishment declines.
These chronic passions, while from real woes
They rise, and yet without the body's fault
Infest the soul, admit one only cure—
Diversion, hurry, and a restless life,
Vain are the consolations of the wise;
In vain your friends would reason down your pain,
O ye! whose souls relentless love has tam'd
To soft distress or friends untimely fall'n,
Court not the luxury of tender thought,
Nor deem it impious to forget those pains
That hurt the living, nought avail the dead!
Go, soft enthusiast! quit the cypress groves,
Nor to the riv'let's lonely moanings tune
Your sad complaint: go seek the cheerful haunts
Of men, and mingle with the bustling crowd:
Lay schemes for wealth, or pow'r, or fame, the wish
Of nobler minds, and push them night and day;
Or join the caravan in quest of scenes
New to your eyes, and shifting ev'ry hour,
Beyond the Alps, beyond the Appenines:
Or, more advent'rous, rush into the field
Where war grows hot, and raging through the sky
The lofty trumpet swells the madd'ning soul,
And in the hardy camp and toilsome march
Forget all softer and less manly cares.

But most, too passive, when the blood runs low,
Too weakly indolent to strive with pain,
And bravely by resisting conquer fate,

Try Circe's arts, and in the tempting bowl
Of poison'd nectar sweet oblivion swill.
Struck by the pow'rful charm the gloom dissolves
In empty air; Elysium opens round;
A pleasing phrenzy buoys the lighten'd soul,
And sanguine hopes dispel your fleeting care,
And what was difficult and what was dire
Yields to your prowess and superior stars:
The happiest you of all that e'er were mad,
Or are or shall be, could this folly last.
But soon your heav'n is gone; a heavier gloom
Shuts o'er your head, and as the thund'ring stream
Swoln o'er its banks with sudden mountain rain
Sinks from its tumult to a silent brook,
So, when the frantic raptures in your breast
Subside, you languish into mortal man:
You sleep, and waking find yourself undone;
For, prodigal of life, in one rash night
You lavish'd more than might support three days.
A heavy morning comes; your cares return
With tenfold rage. An anxious stomach well
May be endur'd, so may the throbbing head;
But such a dim delirium, such a dream
Involves you, such a dastardly despair
Unmans your soul, as madd'ning Pentheus felt
When, baited round Cithæron's cruel sides,
He saw two Suns and double Thebes ascend.
You curse the sluggish Port, you curse the wretch,
The felon, with unnat'ral mixture first
Who dar'd to violate the virgin wine,
Or on the fugitive Champaign you pour
A thousand curses, for to heav'n it rapt

Your soul to plunge you deeper in despair.
Perhaps you rue ev'n that divinest gift,
The gay, serene, good natur'd Burgundy,
Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine,
And, wish that Heav'n from mortals had withheld
The grape and all intoxicating bowls.

Besides, it wounds you sore to recollect
What follies in your loose unguarded hour
Escap'd. For one irrevocable word,
Perhaps that meant no harm, you lose a friend;
Or in the rage of wine your hasty hand
Performs a deed to haunt you to the grave:
Add, that your means, your health, your parts decay;
Your friends avoid you; brutishly transform'd
They hardly know you; or if one remains
To wish you well, he wishes you in Heav'n.
Despis'd, unwept you fall, who might have left
A sacred, cherish'd, sadly-pleasing name,
A name still to be utter'd with a sigh.
Your last ungraceful scene has quite effac'd
All sense and mem'ry of your former worth.

How to live happiest, how avoid the pains,
The disappointments and disgusts of those
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ,
The precepts here of a divine old man
I could recite. Tho' old he still retain'd
His manly sense and energy of mind.
Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;
He still remember'd that he once was young;
His easy presence check'd no decent joy.
Him ev'n the dissolute admir'd, for he
A graceful looseness when he pleas'd put on,

And laughing, could instruct. Much had he read,
Much more had seen: he study'd from the life,
And in th' original perus'd mankind.

Vers'd in the woes and vanities of life,
He pity'd man, and much he pity'd those
Whom falsely-smiling fate has curs'd with means
To dissipate their days in quest of joy.

'Our aim is happiness; 'tis yours, 'tis mine,'
He said; 'tis the pursuit of all that live;
Yet few attain it, if 'twas e'er attain'd:

But they the widest wander from the mark
Who through the flow'ry paths of saunt'ring joy
Seek this coy goddess, that from stage to stage
Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue:
For not to name the pains that pleasure brings
To counterpoise itself, relentless fate
Forbids that we through gay voluptuous wilds
Should ever roam; and were the Fates more kind
Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale:
Were these exhaustless, nature would grow sick,
And cloy'd with pleasure squeamishly complain
That all is vanity, and life a dream.

Let nature rest: be busy for yourself
And for your friend; be busy ev'n in vain
Rather than tease her sated appetites.
Who never fasts no banquet e'er enjoys;
Who never toils or watches never sleeps.
Let nature rest; and when the taste of joy
Grows keen, indulge, but shun satiety.

'Tis not for mortals always to be blest,
But him the least the dull or painful hours
Of life oppress, whom sober sense conducts

And virtue through this labyrinth we tread.
Virtue and sense I mean not to disjoin;
Virtue and sense are one; and, trust me, still
A faithless heart betrays the head unsound.
Virtue (for mere goodnature is a fool)
Is sense and spirit with humanity:
'Tis sometimes angry, and its frown confounds;
'Tis ev'n vindictive, but in vengeance just.
Knaves fain would laugh at it; some great ones dare;
But at his heart the most undaunted son
Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.
To noblest uses this determines wealth;
This is the solid pomp of prosp'rous days,
The peace and shelter of adversity:
And if you pant for glory build your fame
On this foundation, which the secret shock
Defies of envy and all-sapping time.
The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes
The vulgar eye: the suffrage of the wise,
The praise that's worth ambition is attain'd
By sense alone and dignity of mind.

Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heav'n, a happiness
That ev'n above the smiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great nature's favourites; a wealth
That ne'er incumbers nor can be transferr'd.
Riches are oft by guilt and baseness earn'd,
Or dealt by chance to shield a lucky knave,
Or throw a cruel sunshine on a fool:
But for one end, one much-neglected use,
Are riches worth your care (for nature's wants
Are few and without opulence supply'd)

This noble end is to produce the soul,
To shew the virtues in their fairest light,
To make humanity the minister
Of bounteous providence, and teach the breast
That gen'rous luxury the gods enjoy.
Thus in his graver vein the friendly sage
Sometimes declaim'd. Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as refin'd as ever Athens heard,
And (strange to tell!) he practis'd what he preach'd.
Skill'd in the passions, how to check their sway
He knew, as far as reason can control
The lawless pow'rs. But other cares are mine:
Form'd in the school of Pæon I relate
What passions hurt the body, what improve,
Avoid them or invite them as you may.

Know then, whatever cheerful and serene
Supports the mind supports the body too;
Hence the most vital movement mortals feel
Is hope, the balm and life-blood of the soul:
It pleases and it lasts. Indulgent Heav'n
Sent down the kind delusion through the paths
Of rugged life to lead us patient on,
And make our happiest state no tedious thing.
Our greatest good and what we least can spare
Is hope; the last of all our evils, fear.

But there are passions grateful to the breast
And yet no friends to life; perhaps they please
Or to excess, and dissipate the soul,
Or while they please torment. The stubborn clown,
The ill-tam'd ruffian and pale usurer,
(If love's omnipotence such hearts can mould)
May safely mellow into love, and grow

Refin'd, humane, and gen'rous, if they can.
Love in such bosoms never to a fault
Or pains or pleases : but, ye finer souls!
Form'd to soft luxury, and prompt to thrill
With all the tumults, all the joys and pains
That beauty gives, with caution and reserve
Indulge the sweet destroyer of repose,
Nor court too much the queen of charming cares;
For while the cherish'd poison in your breast
Ferments and maddens, sick with jealousy,
Absence, distrust, or ev'n with anxious joy,
The wholesome appetites and pow'rs of life
Dissolve in languor : the coy stomach loathes
The genial board ; your cheerful days are gone ;
The gen'rous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is fled :
To sighs devoted and to tender pains
Pensive you sit, or solitary stray,
And waste your youth in musing ; musing first
Toy'd into care your unsuspecting heart ;
It found a liking there, a sportful fire,
And that fomented into serious love,
Which musing daily strengthens and improves
Through all the heights of fondness and romance ;
And you're undone—the fatal shaft has sped,
If once you doubt whether you love or no :
The body wastes away, th' infected mind,
Dissolv'd in female tenderness, forgets
Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.
Sweet Heav'n ! from such intoxicating charms
Defend all worthy breasts ! Not that I deem
Love always dang'rous, always to be shunn'd ;
Love well repaid, and not too weakly sunk

In wanton and unmanly tenderness
Adds bloom to health, o'er ev'ry virtue sheds
A gay, humane, a sweet, and gen'rous grace,
And brightens all the ornaments of man:
But fruitless, hopeless, disappointed, rack'd
With jealousy, fatigu'd with hope and fear,
Too serious, or too languishingly fond,
Unnerves the body and unmans the soul.
And some have dy'd for love and some run mad,
And some with desp'rate hands themselves have slain.

Some to extinguish, others to prevent
A mad devotion to one dang'rous fair
Court all they meet, in hopes to dissipate
The cares of love amongst a hundred brides.
Th' event is doubtful; for there are who find
A cure in this, there are who find it not:
'Tis no relief, alas! it rather galls
The wound to those who are sincerely sick;
For while from fev'rish and tumultuous joys
The nerves grow languid and the soul subsides,
The tender fancy smarts with ev'ry sting,
And what was love before is madness now.
Is health your care or luxury your aim?
Be temp'rate still: when nature bids, obey;
Her wild impatient sallies bear no curb:
But when the prurient habit of delight
Or loose imagination spurs you on
To deeds above your strength, impute it not
To nature; nature all compulsion hates.
Ah! let nor luxury nor vain renown
Urge you to feats you well might sleep without;
To make what should be rapture a fatigue,

A tedious task, nor in the wanton arms
Of twining Lais melt your manhood down;
For from the colliquation of soft joys
How chang'd you rise! the ghost of what you were:
Languid and melancholy, and gaunt and wan,
Your veins exhausted and your nerves unstrung.
Spoil'd of its balm and sprightly zest, the blood
Grows vapid phlegm; along the tender nerves
(To each slight impulse tremblingly awake)
A subtle fiend, that mimics all the plagues,
Rapid and restless, springs from part to part:
The blooming honours of your youth are fall'n,
Your vigour pines, your vital pow'rs decay,
Diseases haunt you, and untimely age
Creeps on, unsocial, impotent, and lewd.
Infatuate, impious Epicure! to waste
The stores of pleasure, cheerfulness, and health!
Infatuate all who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition ev'ry hour pursue!

Who pines with love, or in lascivious flames
Consumes, is with his own consent undone:
He chuses to be wretched, to be mad,
And warn'd proceeds and wilful to his fate.
But there's a passion whose tempestuous sway
Tears up each virtue planted in the breast,
And shakes to ruins proud philosophy:
For pale and trembling Anger rushes in
With falt'ring speech, and eyes that wildly stare,
Fierce as the tiger, madder than the seas,
Desp'rate, and arm'd with more than human strength.
How soon the calm, humane, and polish'd man
Forgets compunction, and starts up a fiend!

Who pines in love, or wastes with silent cares
Envy or ignominy, or tender grief,
Slowly descends and ling'ring to the shades;
But he whom anger stings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and rushes apoplectic down,
Or a fierce fever hurries him to hell:
For as the body through unnumber'd strings
Reverb'rates each vibration of the soul,
As is the passion such is still the pain
The body feels or chronic or acute;
And oft a sudden storm at once o'erpow'rs
The life or gives your reason to the winds.
Such fates attend the rash alarm of fear
And sudden grief, and rage and sudden joy.
There are mean-time to whom the boist'rous fit
Is health, and only fills the sails of life:
For where the mind a torpid winter leads,
Wrapt in a body corpulent and cold,
And each clogg'd function lazily moves on,
A gen'rous sally spurns th' incumbent load,
Unlocks the breast, and gives a cordial glow.
But if your wrathful blood is apt to boil,
Or are your nerves too irritably strung,
Wave all dispute: be cautious if you joke;
Keep Lent for ever, and forswear the bowl;
For one rash moment sends you to the shades,
Or shatters ev'ry hopeful scheme of life,
And gives to horror all your days to come.
Fate, arm'd with thunder, fire, and ev'ry plague
That ruins, tortures, or distracts mankind,
And makes the happy wretched in an hour,
O'erwhelms you not with woes so horrible

As your own wrath, nor gives more sudden blows.

While choler works, good friend, you may be wrong;
Distrust yourself, and sleep before you fight;
'Tis not too late to-morrow to be brave;
If honour bids, to-morrow kill or die.
But calm advice against a raging fit
Avails too little; and it braves the pow'r
Of all that ever taught in prose or song
To tame the fiend that sleeps a gentle lamb
And wakes a lion. Unprovok'd and calm
You reason well, see as you ought to see,
And wonder at the madness of mankind;
Seiz'd with the common rage, you soon forget
The speculations of your wiser hours:
Beset with furies of all deadly shapes,
Fierce and insidious, violent and slow,
With all that urge or lure us on to fate,
What refuge shall we seek, what arms prepare!
Where reason proves too weak, or void of wiles
To cope with subtile or impetuous pow'rs,
I would invoke new passions to your aid;
With indignation would extinguish fear,
With fear or gen'rous pity vanquish rage,
And love with pride, and force to force oppose.

There is a charm, a pow'r that sways the breast,
Bids ev'ry passion revel or be still,
Inspires with rage, or all your cares dissolves,
Can sooth distraction, and almost despair:
That pow'r is music; far beyond the stretch
Of those unmeaning warblers on our stage,
Those clumsy heroes, those fat-headed gods,
Who move no passion justly but contempt,

Who like our dancers (light indeed and strong)
Do wond'rous feats, but never heard of grace.
The fault is ours; we hear those monstrous arts—
Good Heav'n! we praise them; we with loudest peals
Applaud the fool that highest lifts his heels,
And with insipid shew of rapture die
Of idiot notes impertinently long.
But he the muse's laurel justly shares,
A poet he, and touch'd with heav'n's own fire,
Who with bold rage or solemn pomp of sounds
Inflames, exalts, and ravishes the soul;
Now tender, plaintive, sweet almost to pain,
In love dissolves you; now in sprightly strains
Breathes a gay rapture through your thrilling breast,
Or melts the heart with airs divinely sad,
Or wakes to horror the tremendous strings.
Such was the Bard whose heav'nly strains of old
Appeas'd the fiend of melancholy Saul;
Such was, if old and heathen fame say true,
The man who bade the Theban domes ascend,
And tam'd the savage nations with his song;
And such the Thracian whose melodious lyre,
Tun'd to soft woe, made all the mountains weep,
Sooth'd ev'n th' inexorable pow'rs of Hell,
And half redeem'd his lost Eurydice.
Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
Expels diseases, softens ev'ry pain,
Subdues the rage of poison and the plague;
And hence the wise of ancient days ador'd
One pow'r of Physic, Melody, and Song.

FOUR STANZAS

IN IMITATION OF SPENSER,

Written (as mentioned in Dr. Armstrong's life)

At Mr. Thomson's desire, for his

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

I.

FULL many a fiend did haunt this house of rest,
 And made of passive wights an easy prey.
 Here Lethargy, with deadly sleep opprest,
 Stretch'd on his back a mighty lubbard lay,
 Heaving his sides, and snored night and day :
 To stir him from his trance it was not eath,
 And his half-open'd eye he shut straightway :
 He led, I ween, the softest way to death,
 And taught withouten pain or strife to yield the
 breath.

II.

Of limbs enormous, but withal unsound,
 Soft-swoln and pale, here lay the Hydropsie ;
 Unwieldy man ! with belly monstrous round,
 For ever fed with watery supply,
 For still he drank and yet he still was dry.
 And here a moping Mystery did sit,
 Mother of Spleen, in robes of various dye ;
 She call'd herself the Hypochondriac Fit,
 And frantic seem'd to some, to others seem'd a wit.

III.

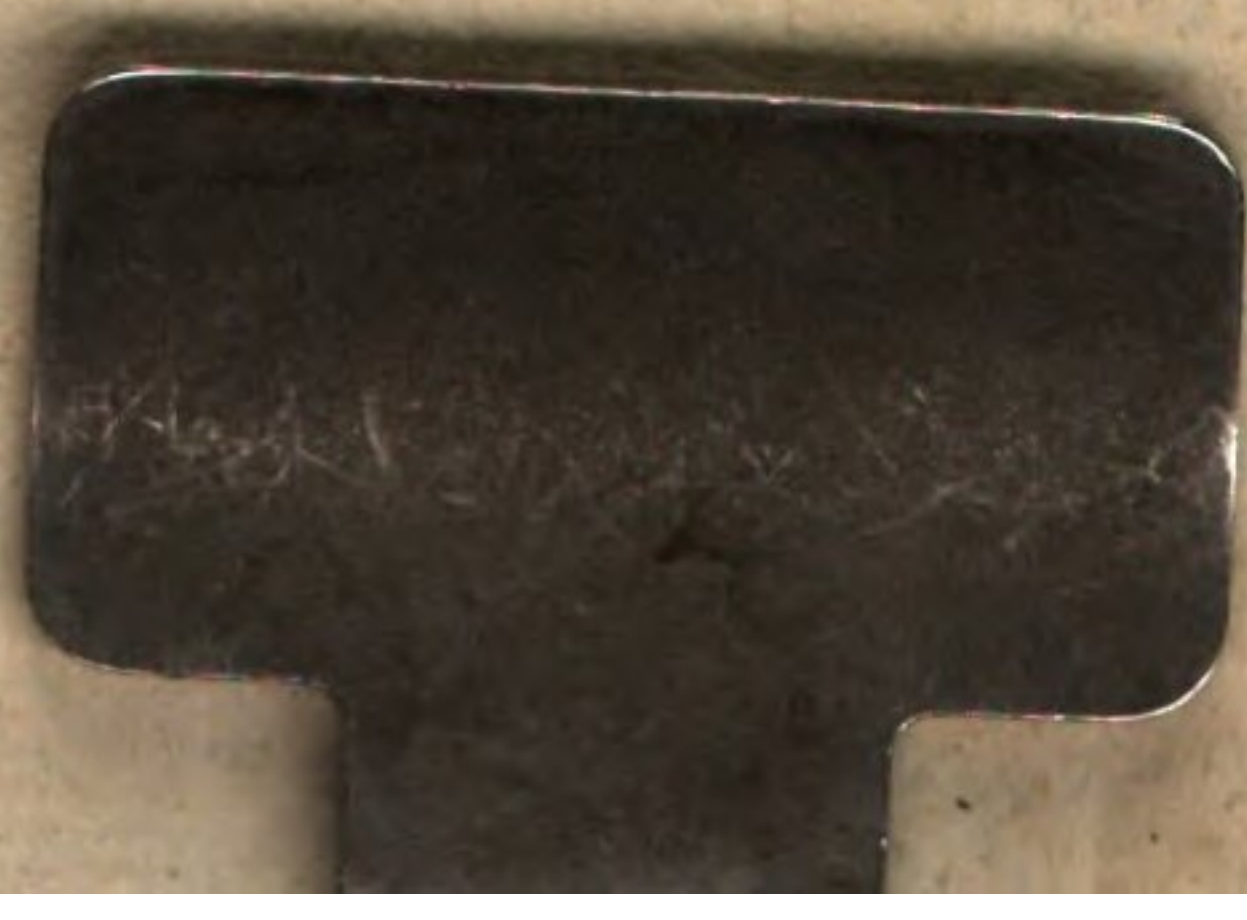
A lady was she whimsical and proud,
Yet oft' thro' fear her pride would crouchen low;
She felt or fancy'd in her flutt'ring mood
All the diseases that the Spitals know,
And sought all physic that the shops bestow,
And still new leeches and new drugs would try:
'Twas hard to hit her humour high or low,
For sometimes she would laugh, and sometimes cry,
Sometimes would waxen wroth, and all she knew
not why.

IV.

Fast by her side a listless virgin pin'd
With aking head and squeamish heart burnings;
Pale, bloated, cold, she seem'd to hate mankind,
But lov'd in secret all forbidden things.
And here the Tertian shook his chilling wings;
And here the Gout, half tiger, half a snake,
Rag'd with an hundred teeth, an hundred stings.
These and a thousand Furies more did shake
Those weary realms, and kept ease-loving men
awake.

THE END.

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